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SEPTEMBER 2026

SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

SOHA914.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **COMMUNITY MEETING** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

— WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 - 7:00 PM — SOCIAL HOUR/DINNER - 6:15 PM —

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD

# A LIVELY TOWN HALL WITH THE SOHA BOARD AND OUR SOHA MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

**YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A LIVELY DISCUSSION  
AND GREAT HONEY BAKED HAM DINNER**

## LET'S TALK ABOUT...

- What was your takeaway from our Mayoral Debate?
- Who has the real power in the city?
- Why voting is so important - especially now!
- Will LA City Charter reform accomplish anything?
- Is there a good permanent solution for the unhoused?
- How will SB79 affect your neighborhood?
- What has changed in Sherman Oaks that concerns you?
- Do you feel your concerns are being heard?
- What are your priorities for LA?
- Confused about anything? - We'll explain!

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ **DON'T MISS THIS TOWN HALL** ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀

Visit SOHA's New Website at [www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com). Streaming begins at 7:00 pm - Click "Stream September 16 SOHA Meeting" button on our homepage. Meeting video available next day - Click "SOHA Meeting Videos" button on our homepage. Email your town hall questions to [SOHA914@gmail.com](mailto:SOHA914@gmail.com) no later than Monday, September 14



**RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH - HONEY BAKED HAM**  
**FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 4 - SOHA SOCIAL HOUR @ 6:15 PM**

# 2026 LA MAYORAL RUNOFF COMPARING TWO GOVERNING RECORDS NEITHER INSPIRES CONFIDENCE FOR A BRIGHTER LA

*by Tom Glick, SOHA Planning and Land Use Committee Co-Chair*

The recent SOHA Mayoral Debate in Sherman Oaks crystallized the central dilemma facing Los Angeles voters ahead of the runoff election. The race presents a choice between two distinct records – the pragmatic coalition-building approach of incumbent Mayor Karen Bass versus the progressive legislative approach of Councilmember Nithya Raman. An evaluation of both candidates' records reveals a city grappling with systemic operational challenges.

**Governing Philosophies – Doer vs Academic** – A fundamental contrast centers on the candidates' approaches to execution, highlighting a deep disagreement over the leadership LA requires.

- **Karen Bass's Approach** – The mayor positions herself as a doer. Supporters lean into her reputation as a pragmatic executive who focuses on pulling levers of power, striking labor compromises, and launching central initiatives like Inside Safe. However, critics counter that this style rolls out massive programs without establishing the long-term administrative architecture or fiscal discipline to sustain them.
- **Nithya Raman's Approach** – The councilmember's governing philosophy draws criticism for treating critical civic matters like an academic assignment. Opponents argue that her background leads her to over-analyze systemic problems, treating urgent municipal crises as data-driven research projects rather than real-world emergencies requiring decisive intervention. Critics argue that studying every issue indefinitely breeds bureaucratic stagnation.

**Public Safety, Local Policing, and State Mandates** – The role of law enforcement and zoning authority represents two major structural divisions where both candidates face distinct vulnerabilities.

- **Bass's Record** – While she prioritized expanding the LAPD, actual staffing levels remain well below original targets, and the massive financial obligations created by approved salary increases have severely strained the city's budget. Conversely, she is viewed as better poised to directly challenge the state and defend local municipal control, resisting Sacramento's attempts to dictate how Los Angeles grows.
- **Raman's Record** – She faces heavy pushback regarding municipal camping, with critics pointing to her repeated votes against expanding anti-camping laws protecting schools and parks. Furthermore, her confrontational relationship with the police department was evident during the debate, where she attacked local law enforcement over federal immigration priorities. Regarding zoning, her approach aligns with state housing mandates to force compliance on local neighborhoods, which critics view as a surrender of municipal authority.

**The Homelessness Crisis and Local Commerce** – Neither candidate has managed to establish a definitive solution to the city's most visible crisis, and both face sharp criticism regarding local economic management.

- **Inside Safe and Business Vitality** – Mayor Bass staked her term on her signature Inside Safe program, which moved thousands of unhoused individuals off the streets. However, data reveals significant systemic leaks – reports show an increase in unsheltered homelessness, with more than 40% of participants ultimately returning to the streets. Economically, critics argue her administration lacks a concrete strategy to preserve local entertainment jobs or make LA economically competitive.
- **Measure ULA and Street Vending** – CM Raman has positioned herself as a champion of progressive revenue streams, but her unwavering support for Measure ULA (the "mansion tax") is heavily criticized for chilling commercial property transactions and stalling private housing construction. Additionally, she is criticized for defending unpermitted street vendors at the direct expense of permitted, brick-and-mortar restaurants.

**Administrative Accountability and Workplace Presence** – A core issue for both campaigns is day-to-day administrative efficacy and showing up to execute the basic responsibilities of governance.

- **Bass's Record** – Mayor Bass faces parallel criticism regarding her executive presence, most notably her physical absence from the city when the catastrophic January 2025 wildfires erupted. The subsequent lack of transparency surrounding the internal review of the city's emergency response raised deep concerns about crisis preparedness, while basic street-level code enforcement remains bogged down by bureaucratic inertia.
- **Raman's Record** – CM Raman faces an accountability crisis stemming from her legislative attendance record, having missed nearly 3,000 City Council votes (roughly 14% of total votes cast). Furthermore, constituents report that her layered staff structure operates as a bloated bureaucracy that insulates her from local oversight.

**Conclusion – The Choice Before Angelenos** – Ultimately, the comparison of these two records reveals that the mayoral election is less about competing ideologies and more about competing administrative deficiencies. Voters backing Mayor Bass are choosing a conventional, establishment coalition-builder who has successfully centralized major initiatives but struggled with fiscal discipline and emergency accountability. Voters backing Councilmember Raman are choosing a progressive policy theorist with a bold legislative agenda, but one whose record is marked by chronic legislative absences and an antagonistic relationship with law enforcement.

While neither candidate inspires confidence that radical, foundational changes are on the horizon, a clear distinction remains in their presentation. Bass is widely seen as well-intentioned and collaborative. Raman, conversely, faces critiques that her rigid progressive agenda and recurring council absences treat political offices as academic platforms to promote herself on a wider political stage.

This sentiment was colorfully captured in a post by former mayoral candidate Spencer Pratt, who stated *“As atrocious as Karen is, I honestly can’t envision Nithya doing ANYTHING better than Karen, but I can absolutely picture her doing things even worse than Karen. A Karen Bass Mayorship is depressing. A Nithya Raman Mayorship is terrifying.”*

## HOW YOU VOTE OR DON’T VOTE MATTERS

*by Maria Kalban, SOHA Legislative Committee Chair*

As Chair of the Legislative Committee, I found the candidates’ responses to a key SOHA Mayoral Debate question particularly revealing – How do they feel about Sacramento sledgehammering its way into dictating local housing policy in Los Angeles? The contrast in their answers couldn’t be starker.

- **Our Mayor Bass** argued that the State’s aggressive push is unnecessary because Los Angeles has already done the heavy lifting. We expanded our housing capacity locally through a robust Housing Element plan – one that received official state approval and certification.
- **Our Councilmember Raman**, on the other hand, claimed the city failed to do the work, asserting that Sacramento is fully justified in stepping in, stripping away local land-use control, and dictating where new density must go.

The Mayor is right – LA did do the work. Many of you will remember when our coalition, United Neighbors, was horrified by the city’s early draft of the state-mandated Housing Element which proposed opening single-family neighborhoods to multi-unit apartment buildings to meet the state mandate. We felt there was a better way. We went to work showing that LA had ample capacity to rezone for high-density housing along commercial corridors in each community without invading low-density residential neighborhoods. We mapped out our CD4 communities like Sherman Oaks, Encino, Studio City, and Los Feliz, and then expanded our mapping efforts across more than 25 Westside and citywide neighborhoods.

The results were consistent – LA could easily accommodate its required housing numbers without upzoning existing single-family and sensitive multi-family areas. We presented our ground-level community data to the Planning Department and the Mayor’s office. To their credit, the final certified LA Housing Element added significant density along commercial corridors while safeguarding residential neighborhoods. The state approved and certified LA’s plan. The Mayor was correct – LA did the work. Yet Sacramento continues demanding more.

So why did our own councilmember insist we failed to do the work? The state certified our Housing Element plan when many cities failed and were not certified. The reality is that housing production in LA isn’t blocked by a lack of zoned capacity – it is stalled by massive economic headwinds. Developers face Measure ULA tax burdens, sky-high labor and material costs, elevated interest rates, and a notoriously slow and expensive city permitting and approval process. Opening up quiet residential streets to speculative development doesn’t solve these systemic financial realities.

In 2024 when the City Council voted on the Housing Element, our Councilmember Raman introduced a last-minute motion to force density into some single-family neighborhoods. Her motion was defeated – but this revealed her core policy approach – upzoning established neighborhoods. That has been her focus since taking office, and it clearly remains her agenda and is why she feels we haven’t done the work.

While the Mayor rightly defended local control on the debate stage, the critical question remains – Will Mayor Bass back up her words? Will she travel to Sacramento to demand respect for LA’s certified Housing Element plan and local land-use authority? We reached out to the Mayor’s office to offer our citywide coalition’s full support for her approach. We have yet to hear back.

As November approaches, voters are left with a stark choice. Do we push the mayor to do better or do we keep fighting the councilmember’s ideology.

# OUR NEWLY PLANTED TREES ARE THRIVING

*by Kelly Lynch, SOHA Beautification Committee Chair*

One of the most rewarding outcomes of our April SOHA ShineLA Service Day has been watching the newly planted trees flourish along Ventura Blvd. Thanks to the local businesses that stepped up to adopt and care for these young trees, most are growing beautifully and becoming a wonderful addition to our community. We would like to especially recognize several businesses that have gone above and beyond in caring for their adopted trees – Paw Rehab, Starbucks on Ventura, Fazio Cleaners, Topsy Cow, Marmalade Cafe, Tacos 1986, Mel's Drive-In, Sherman Oaks Car Wash, 35MM Pro, La Galette, World Market, Sherman Oaks Lock & Safe, and Nail Society.

Their commitment to regular watering and ongoing care has made a tremendous difference in helping these trees establish strong roots especially during the recent record-breaking heat wave. Not every tree had an easy start, and some needed extra attention along the way. Thanks to our Beautification Committee volunteers, these trees got the TLC they needed to survive and they're slowly coming back.

Our ShineLA 2026 tree success is a testament to what can happen when volunteers, businesses, and residents work together. Thank you to everyone who has helped care for these trees. Your efforts are creating a greener, healthier, and more beautiful Sherman Oaks for generations to come.

For more information about our beautification team, please email me at [klynch@kplselect.com](mailto:klynch@kplselect.com)

## ASK BUSINESSES TO BE GOOD NEIGHBORS!

*by Howard Jaffe, SOHA Homeless Committee Chair*

Through chairing the SOHA Homeless Committee and being a team leader for Volunteers Cleaning Communities (VCC) here in Sherman Oaks, I've become very familiar with the condition of our main commercial streets. Twice a month, our VCC group is out on Ventura Blvd, Van Nuys Blvd, and other streets, removing trash from streets and gutters. We are often surprised that some of our shop and restaurant owners are not maintaining the sidewalks and street areas in front of or adjacent to their businesses. We will do it for them when we are in the area, but this is something businesses should be doing themselves on a daily basis. In our experience, the city does not routinely clean sidewalks, and the gutters along our commercial streets are rarely cleaned – even Ventura Blvd.

We try to speak with businesses that are open when we're cleaning, but most of our cleanups take place early Saturday mornings, when many businesses are closed. I could list the Sherman Oaks businesses that aren't maintaining the areas around their properties, but this article is not meant to shame anyone. Instead, I ask all of you to speak up to businesses you patronize about better maintaining the areas around their property. Tell the owner or manager that keeping the area clean is part of being a good neighbor. I would also encourage our bar and restaurant owners to provide ashtrays for customers who smoke outside. The number of cigarette butts we find on sidewalks near these establishments is shocking.

What we're asking doesn't require a huge amount of work. A little attention each day can make a big difference in how our commercial streets look and feel. I've also noticed that neglected and poorly maintained areas seem more likely to attract people who are living on the streets. Keeping our neighborhoods clean and well-maintained benefits everyone.

## RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

### HONEY BAKED HAM

*by Jane Kaplan, SOHA Restaurant Chair* – Remember when it seemed like Honey Baked Ham stores were disappearing? Turns out, they're still going strong with over 400 locations nationwide. And now, Sherman Oaks has its very own Honey Baked Ham store - at 14427 Ventura Blvd. And here's the fun part. The co-owner is Leslie David Baker – better known as Stanley Hudson from "The Office". Yep, the man who once guarded the break room is now guarding hams and smoked turkeys. You'll find the classics, bone-in hams, smoked turkey, family meals, sides, everything you'd want for easy dinners, lunches, or Holiday meals. So, whether you're planning Thanksgiving or just dinner on a Tuesday, it's nice to have it close by – and fun imagining Stanley himself making sure you don't forget the potato salad. Enjoy the glaze Sherman Oaks!

We're all looking forward to enjoying some Honey Baked Hams and Smoked Turkey along with the side dishes at our Town Hall meeting on September 16th. I believe we'll all remember why some traditions never go out of style. See you then!

# THE TRADITION CONTINUES – JOIN US FOR THE 34TH ANNUAL SHERMAN OAKS STREET FAIR

*by Victoria Bourdas Martinez, Sherman Oaks/Encino Chamber of Commerce CEO*

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 18 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Ventura Blvd will once again come alive between Kester Ave and Van Nuys Blvd as residents, businesses, nonprofits, and visitors gather for one of the community's most anticipated events of the year. For more than three decades, the Street Fair has brought together everything that makes Sherman Oaks such a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. It's a day to explore local businesses, discover new favorites, reconnect with neighbors, and experience the energy and creativity that define our community. Attendees can look forward to:

- Local business and community organization exhibits
- Unique vendors, artisans, and retailers
- Live entertainment and performances
- Family-friendly activities
- Food and refreshments from local restaurants and specialty vendors
- Opportunities to support and engage with the people and organizations that help make Sherman Oaks thrive.

More than just a day of entertainment, the Street Fair serves as a showcase of the community spirit that has long been the hallmark of Sherman Oaks. It provides a space where local businesses can connect with residents, nonprofit organizations can share their missions, and neighbors can come together to celebrate the place they call home. Produced by the Sherman Oaks/Encino Chamber of Commerce, the event highlights the important role local businesses, schools, community groups, and civic organizations play in strengthening our neighborhood. Each year, thousands of attendees enjoy the chance to explore Ventura Blvd in a way that is only possible during this special annual gathering.

Whether you're a long-time resident or experiencing the Street Fair for the first time, there's something for everyone to enjoy. We invite you to spend the day or a few hours celebrating local businesses, community connections, and the unique character of Sherman Oaks. For event information, sponsorship opportunities, or vendor registration, visit [www.shermanoaksstreetfair.org](http://www.shermanoaksstreetfair.org).

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

*by Matt Epstein, SOHA President*

*Farewells, New Arrivals, and the Great Coffee-and-Bagel War* – Some sad news to open with. After more than twenty years, Boneyard Bistro will close its doors on September 12. Owner and chef Aaron Robins posted a heartfelt farewell – full of love and gratitude to the Sherman Oaks community that made these two decades so good – and he's now ready for his next chapter. Boneyard has been one of those rare places that could do slow-smoked brisket and eclectic bistro fare with equal confidence, and it'll be missed. We wish Aaron nothing but the best, and hope his next venture brings him every happiness.

But as one door closes, another is already being unlocked. Chef Ludo Lefebvre of Petit Trois has signed a lease to take over the corner restaurant spot at Ventura and Woodman – the space Samos has occupied these last few years. Word is it'll be a sandwich concept, though it's very early days. Ludo asked to circle back in a month or so, when he'll have a clearer vision and, importantly, a name. So, stay tuned – this one's worth watching.

*Now about that coffee-and-bagel war* – Have you noticed? Sherman Oaks and Studio City seem to sprout a new coffee shop or bagel spot every single week. The longtime Le Pain Quotidien space is being reborn as a bagel shop. And Blank Street Coffee has just taken over the corner of Fulton and Ventura, already pulling a line out the door. Peek inside and you'll see this is not your grandmother's coffee shop – think swanky, design-forward, cool furniture, the works!

And somehow, amid all the espresso and everything bagels, the sushi boom rolls on. Ventura Blvd already boasts more than thirty sushi restaurants, and here comes one more – Sumi Sushi, opening right next door to "Burger She Wrote". Sumi takes a fresh fish delivery every day, which means what the chef raved about yesterday may not be what he steers you toward today – you go with whatever's freshest off the truck. That's the whole point.

Between the terrific massage spots, the ever-growing sushi scene, and now a full-blown coffee-and-bagel arms race, our little stretch of the Valley is turning into a genuinely wonderful place to call home. *See you on the Boulevard.*

# SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

The **ONLY** member-supported, volunteer-run, non-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the quality of life here in Sherman Oaks.

Learn more about SOHA on our website at **[www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com)**

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**SHERMAN OAKS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**

POST OFFICE BOX 5223  
SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA 91413-5223

[www.SOHA914.com](http://www.SOHA914.com)  
[SOHA914@gmail.com](mailto:SOHA914@gmail.com)  
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## IN THIS ISSUE OF SOHA NEWS

**- DON'T MISS OUR LIVELY TOWN HALL -**

**You'll want to be part of a wide-ranging discussion.  
Voice your concerns! Get your questions answered!**

**Also: Comparing two governing records; your vote -  
or no vote - matters; newly-planted trees are thriving;  
and the return of the Sherman Oaks Street Fair!**